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CONSUMER TIME

THE STORY OF WEEDS

NETWORK: NBC

DATE: June 8, 1946

ORIGIN: WRC

TIME: 12:15-12:30 PM -EST

(Produced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture...this script is for reference only and may not be broadcast without special permission. The title CONSUMER TIME is restricted to network broadcast of the program...presented for thirteen years...in the interest of consumers)

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1. SOUND: CASH REGISTER RINGS TWICE...MONEY IN TILL
2. JOHN: It's CONSUMER TIME!
3. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.
4. ANNCR: During the next fifteen minutes, the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations make their facilities available for the presentation of CONSUMER TIME, by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. And here are Mrs. Freyman and Johnny.
5. FREYMAN: Johnny, I've got a good riddle for you today. Ready?
6. JOHN: Well, I'm not sure, Mrs. Freyman...but go ahead anyway.
7. FREYMAN: What is it that enters your house like an uninvited guest... pushes your family into the corners...and snatches the food and drink from your table? It also doubles your housekeeping, wears out your furniture...upsets your domestic routine...and after threatening never to leave...angrily orders you out of your own home. Now, what is it?
8. JOHN: A mother-in-law?
9. FREYMAN: (LAUGHING) No, Johnny...it's a weed.
10. JOHN: But weeds don't come into the house....
11. FREYMAN: No, but they come into the house where your plants live...you know, the garden?

12. JOHN: Oh! (LIGHT DAWNS) Oh! I get it. Weeds really do all those things, don't they. Gardeners certainly don't invite them... but the weeds make themselves at home...and rob the other plants of sun...and water...and nourishment from the soil.
13. FREYMAN: To say nothing of some weeds that climb all over the crops... (EXASPERATED) and literally smother them to death. I don't know what they are or why they do it...I just know they do.
14. JOHN: Well...you're not the only one. Weeds harbor insects and plant diseases...and they're a headache for the farmer who produces seeds...because often the weed seeds are the same size as the seeds he's trying to grow...and they're hard to separate.
15. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny, at this point, I can't think of anything nice to say about weeds. Like death and taxes weeds are always with us.
16. JOHN: They always have been. You know, I've been talking to the experts on weeds down at the U. S. Department of Agriculture... and they say the problem of weeds is as old as farming itself. And another thing they told me is that we imported most of our worst weed pests from other countries.
17. FREYMAN: You don't mean we actually brought them in deliberately?
18. JOHNNY: Mmmm hmmm...we did some. Of course we didn't think they were going to turn out to be weeds. But other weeds really came into the country without our knowing it. Let's turn back the clock and I'll show you what I mean.
19. SOUND: (Series of rapid clicks...clock being turned back.)
20. FREYMAN: Kind of rusty, isn't it?
21. JOHN: Ssshh...we're almost there.
22. FREYMAN: Where?

23. JOHN: The year is 1672 and...the place...a farm in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. (LOWERS VOICE) See...there's farmer Daniel straightening up from his work to greet a friend from town.
24. DANIEL: Hallo there, Brother Thomas.
25. THOMAS: How goes the farm, neighbor? I see you got your stone wall built. Sturdy looking.
26. DANIE: The stones are flourishing all right. Next year I intend to plant a new way. Going to use my gun to shoot the seeds into the soil...between the rocks.
27. DANIEL & THOMAS: (BOTH GIVE SHORT LAUGHS)
28. THOMAS: Say, what's this coming up here, Daniel?
29. DANIEL: A short memory you have, Thomas. You do not recognize weeds that grew on your father's farm in old England. That is chickweed...and over there you can find some knotweed, too.
30. THOMAS: (ASTONISHED) Weeds! Weeds! We might just as well be back in old England...as New England.
31. DANIE: And here we have stones too.
32. SOUND: MUSIC BRIDGE
33. FREYMAN: Well, Johnny, just how did those European weeds get over here?
34. JOHN: The colonists probably brought the seeds over themselves...mixed in with their other seeds...unintentionally of course.
35. FREYMAN: But Johnny, isn't it a little strange that these imported weeds would be more serious than the weeds that were already here?
36. JOHN: Not so strange, Mrs. Freyman. You see when the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts, most of the land was covered with forest. So many of the weeds were the kind that would grow where it was shady. When the forest were cleared, those weeds just didn't grow.
37. FREYMAN: I see...the weeds that grew in the woods weren't used to these new conditions...so they died.



38. JOHN: But the seeds that came from the open fields in England were used to the sunlight...so they got started faster than the weeds that were already growing here. It works just the other way around too.
39. FREYMAN: How do you mean, Johnny?
40. JOHN: Any prairie farmer who plants trees for a woodlot or a shelter belt notices that the prairie weeds disappear. But he finds himself with a whole new crop of thriving woodland weeds.
41. FREYMAN: As a Victory Gardener I can sympathize with him.
- What are some of the other weeds that we imported?
42. JOHN: One of the meanest weeds we have is the wild mustard. It came from Europe originally. We have eight or ten different kinds today. They tell me in some sections they call wild mustard "field kale", "field mustard", or "runch weed". "Crowd weed" and "yellow flower" are related to the wild mustard too. And you know, Mrs. Freyman, wild mustard is probably the most troublesome weed the wheat farmer has to fight.
43. FREYMAN: Then it's especially important to wipe out wild mustard today... so we can grow as much grain as possible to feed the hungry world.
44. JOHN: Another weed pest...and I do mean pest...is bindweed...It's bad especially in the mid-west and far west.
45. FREYMAN: Tsn't bindweed the same as wild morning glory, Johnny?
46. JOHN: Well, I think a botanist would say they were members of different plant families. But to the farmer...bindweed, creeping Jenny, and morning glory are the same...because they're all just plain ornery.

47. FREYMAN: Wild morning glories certainly are deceptive creatures. They have such beautiful flowers...and yet before you know it... they've run all over everything.
48. JOHN: Another mean weed, Mrs. Freyman, is Johnson grass.
49. FREYMAN: Is it a weed...or is it a grass, Johnny?
50. JOHN: It's both. Johnson grass is a native of the Mediterranean region. It was first introduced to this country as a very fine grass for hay.
51. FREYMAN: Well, wasn't it?
52. JOHN: Indeed it was...at first. But let's hear what some farmers actually thought about it...a little later... We're heading South this time...South that is.
53. MUSIC: BRIDGE...DIXIE
54. FATHER: Handsome is as handsome does...I say. Son, I tell you, Johnson grass can ruin you.
55. SON: But, Dad, you just said last week Johnson grass was fine for hay.
56. FATHER: And it is...it is. But the pesky stuff don't know enough to stay a grass. Just give it an inch...and 'fore you know, it'll have a couple of acres. Why I've seen it wipe out whole cotton fields. Just isn't any more room for cotton or anything else when Johnson grass takes over.
57. SON: Guess a farmer should leave Johnson grass strickly alone in that case.
58. FATHER: If a farmer's not interested in raising anything but hay on his place...and if he don't give a hang for his neighbor's rights...why my advise to him is...go 'head and raise Johnson grass. But if you're trying to raise cotton...Johnson grass'll keep you as busy as a hen in a wool basket.

59. MUSIC: BRIDGE

60. JOHN: Johnson grass is a striking example of a plant that got out of hand...and became a real pest. Another good example of a plant like that...is the dandelion. It was brought here from Europe as a food plant.
61. FREYMAN: You mean as greens? I know lots of people who like boiled dandelion greens.
62. JOHN: And dandelions were also imported because people thought their flowers were ornamental.
63. FREYMAN: Well, they certainly aren't ornamental on my lawn.
64. JOHN: Well, how about 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid?
65. SOUND: PAUSE
66. FREYMAN: (OVERWHELMED) Say it...again...Johnny.
67. JOHN: 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid.
68. FREYMAN: I'm impressed... , I'm overwhelmed...but what does it mean?
69. JOHN: That's 2,4-D. the new weed killer. Remember we talked a little about it on our Victory Garden program...back in March?
70. FREYMAN: Well why didn't you say so...dichloro...oh no...oh no. Maybe you talked about it, Johnny. But I'm sure I...anyway... What I want to know is...will it kill the dandelions on my lawn... and I bet there are plenty of other people who want to know the same thing...and victory gardeners too.
71. JOHN: The scientists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture say 2,4-D is great stuff for lawns. It will kill off your dandelions ...chickweed...and many other kinds of weeds that we've been talking about.
72. FREYMAN: With a name like that...I can believe it.
73. JOHN: Of course 24-D won't hurt the grass...But...it's thumbs down on 2,4-D for the garden. Here's what the experts say....



74. SCIENTIST: Do not use 2,4-D to kill weeds in your garden. The tiniest amount of this weed killer is fatal to many garden vegetables. Do not use a sprayer in your garden that has contained 2,4-D if you can help it. If you have to use the same sprayer...make sure you wash it out very carefully.
75. FREYMAN: Just what kind of a product is 2,4-D, Johnny? Is the "D" any relation to DDT...the insecticide?
76. JOHN: Nope...not even a stepson. 2,4-D is what the scientists call a hormone-like compound. It's really a stimulant to the plant. By some complicated process it destroys the starches in the plant...and so the plant really starves to death.
77. FREYMAN: Well, are the scientists recommending 2,4-D for weeds in anything but lawns?
78. JOHN: No they're not...at least not just yet. The scientists know that 2,4-D doesn't harm members of the grass family.
79. FREYMAN: I seem to remember learning in high school botany that wheat and corn are members of the grass family.
80. JOHN: Mmmm hmmm. But there are some things that have to worked out yet before 2,4-D can be recommended for killing weeds in corn or grain fields. But one thing 2,4-D does finish off very nicely is ragweed... You know what ragweed is, Mrs. Freyman.
81. FREYMAN: (SUFFERING FROM HAY FEVER) Indeed I do, Johnny. Brings my hay fever on just to mention ragweed.
82. JOHN: (LAUGHS) And lots of other hay fever sufferers know just how you feel about that. But 2,4-D either kills ragweed or keeps it from producing pollen.
83. FREYMAN: (NORMAL VOICE) I feel better already...But, Johnny, to get back to the weeds in the wheat fields. (You see, I'm still worried about all the wheat we need in the world.) What can the farmers use if they can't use 2,4-D yet?

84. JOHN: Well, I did hear about some other weed killers...out at the Agricultural Research Center...at Beltsville, Maryland. They're di-nitro compounds...just been developed in the last four years or so. And these are very important in helping us send spring grain to Europe.
85. FREYMAN: How about all the other crops and weeds we grow in America?
86. JOHN: Well, many farmers still find chlorates...generally sodium chlorate...do the best job in wiping out a weed patch.
87. FREYMAN: You say, "still find"...Johnny...then sodium chlorate isn't something new?
88. JOHN: It's comparatively new...when you think how many years there have been farmers on this earth. But we first started using sodium chlorate in 1937. They'd been using it in France before that. And when sodium chlorate was first introduced...we thought it was really "end of story" for the weeds...
89. FREYMAN: What are some of its drawbacks, Johnny...doesn't it kill the weeds?
90. JOHN: Oh it does that all right...but it kills everything else too... And sodium chlorate carries the dangers of fire with it. And it's only within the last five years that the fire hazard has been cut down considerably.
91. FREYMAN: Now, Johnny...what about us victory gardeners...what are we going to use to get the weeds out of our gardens?
92. JOHN: Just your strong right arm...and your hoe, Mrs. Freyman.
93. FREYMAN: Well, I must say that sounds very unglamorous...after you talk about 2,4-D and di-nitro compounds and all.
94. JOHN: But after all the best way to get rid of weeds the world over is still by cultivation and hard work.

95. FREYMAN: In my garden they're the same thing...But Johnny, the food from Victory Gardens is vital this year. We're sending so much food to the hungry people abroad...that the more food we grow and preserve ourselves...the more we'll have. So it's very important to have the best Victory Garden ever.
96. JOHN: And one way to do it is fight weeds. As soon as the soil can be properly worked after each rain...or irrigation...you should do a thorough job of hoeing or cultivating.
97. FREYMAN: That's to kill the weeds that have sprouted...
98. JOHN: Yes, and to leave the ground loose enough to absorb the next rain. Another thing you want to remember is to keep your cultivation shallow...so you won't hurt the vegetable plant roots that lie near the surface.
99. FREYMAN: Johnny, how often should a gardener do his weeding?
100. JOHN: Well, enough to keep the weeds out of the garden.
101. FREYMAN: Which is plenty...and...good enough for me...
102. MUSIC: HAPPY BIRTHDAY...HOLD UNDER FOR ONE VERSE
103. FREYMAN: And now, Johnny...a big happy birthday.
104. JOHN: Well gee! Gee! Thanks a lot, Mrs. Freyman. (PAUSE) But... ah...it's not my birthday.
105. FREYMAN: No, it's CONSUMER TIME's birthday. Today's program marks another milestone...thirteen years on the air.
106. JOHN: Well so it does. But where's the cake, Mrs. Freyman?
107. FREYMAN: Holly Wright is just bringing it into the studio now, Johnny.
108. JOHN: Do you think I'd better go help him carry it?
109. FREYMAN: I don't think so, Johnny. Here he comes. And, as you can see, our cake isn't very big this year. In fact it's a birthday cupcake.
110. JOHN: Cupcake...I never heard of a cupcake birthday cake before.



111. FREYMAN: Well, it just wouldn't do to let our thirteenth anniversary go by unnoticed, Johnny. In these times...we're saving flour ...and fat...and sugar. But we're looking forward to bigger cakes and bigger CONSUMER TIME programs.
112. JOHN: Ah, Mrs. Freyman... How did you figure out a recipe for only one cup cake...did you use a slide rule?
113. FREYMAN: Sh, Johnny. I bought it.
114. JOHN: Well, I think there's enough cake for each one of our regular CONSUMER TIME gang. A big slice for you, Evelyn Freyman.
115. FREYMAN: And a big slice for you, Johnny Batchelder...and a slice for our writer, Eleanor Miller..and our director, Frederick Schweikher.
116. JOHN: And enough left over for Holly Wright, our announcer...and our dramatists.
117. FREYMAN: Thus ends our thirteenth year. And to start our fourteenth year, next week we have a really interesting "before and after" story. It's about how a modern cafeteria was set up in a cannery at Peach Glen, Pennsylvania.
118. JOHN: Yes, industrial feeding is one thing that's really coming of age in this post-war world. And the cafeteria at Peach Glen is one of the finest examples of modern inplant feeding that can be found anywhere. So be with us next week for another edition of....
119. SOUND: CASH REGISTER
120. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME!
121. SOUND: CASH REGISTER...CLOSE DRAWER.



122. ANNCR: CONSUMER TIME, written by Eleanor Miller, and directed by Frederick Schweikher, is presented by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, through the facilities of the National Broadcasting Company and its affiliated independent stations. It comes to you from Washington, D. C.

The National Safety Council says speeding is involved in one out of every three fatal automobile accidents. Remember... accidents don't always happen to somebody else. Drive Slowly!

This is NBC, the National Broadcasting Company.

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